

# NEWS

*From the County of San Bernardino*

**Dennis Hansberger, Third District**

**Josie Gonzales, Fifth District**

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**JGFDS-PR-194 SUPERVISORS SUPPORTS STUDY TOUR FOR YOUTH  
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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

## **SUPERVISORS HELP LOCAL YOUTH GO ON WALKING HISTORY TOUR**

**SAN BERNARDINO** – Support from two San Bernardino County Supervisors will enable local students to spend five days traveling along one of the routes countless slaves took on their quest to freedom.

The Black Voice Foundation, Inc. is hosting the “Footsteps to Freedom Study tour of the Underground Railroad.” The life-changing travel experience will take the students along the Railroad’s central and lesser-known route from Kentucky to Canada.

“This experience is crucial for students to gain a fundamental and personal understanding of America’s struggle for civil liberties and equality for all. I hope they never forget how far we, as a society, have come and must always remember those who fought for them,” said San Bernardino County 3<sup>rd</sup> District Supervisor Dennis Hansberger.

“This study tour will immerse these young people into a unique educational experience that will open their eyes to the determination of individuals who believed so deeply in freedom that they were willing to risk everything for it. May that same determination motivate these students to excel in school and to value the price paid for freedom,” said San Bernardino County 5<sup>th</sup> District Supervisor Josie Gonzales.

The more than 30 youth going on the trip will hear oral history lessons and visit historic towns, museums, and cemeteries as well as safe houses, churches and barns that harbored runaway slaves. The National Park Service has preserved the selected 900-mile route they will trace.

“Imagine the lessons learned walking along the routes and talking with the descendents of those who sought their freedom as well as those who helped them achieve it. These young men and women will gain a true appreciation of the ultimate sacrifices made in the pursuit of equality,” said Gonzales.

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“My hope is that they can come home with a true appreciation of the ultimate price of freedom those before them fought for – and never forget it,” said Supervisor Hansberger.

Many of the students going on the trip live in San Bernardino’s Operation Phoenix area. They have been holding car washes and bake sales to help cover the travel costs. Supervisors Gonzales and Hansberger each contributed \$5,000 to offset their expenses.

“We are happy that the Supervisors Gonzales and Hansberger see the importance in exposing these young people to this little known piece of American history,” said Cheryl Brown of the Black Voice Foundation.

“The study tour is designed to excite youth about learning and inspire them to further their education, but it will also teach them compassion for their fellowman,” said Brown.

Explaining that the true story of the Underground Railroad is one of “love, peace and understanding,” Brown emphasized that the children will learn about a period in time when it was illegal for people of different races to work together for freedom.

“They will learn how they should not take their freedom, as well as their rights to learn to read and write, for granted,” she said.

*For more information on the Footsteps to Freedom Study tour, call (909) 888-5040.*

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